

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

13x21 - "Disregard"

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and on the *Star Trek* tie-in novels
by Pocket Books

TNG 18x21 - "BEST LAID PLANS"

Enterprise escorts Donatra to Romulus aboard her flagship, for a summit to discuss reunification of the two Romulan nations. As soon as she arrives, Donatra is placed under arrest on the faked evidence that she was behind the assassination attempt on Spock. Picard protests, but Tal'Aura warns that Picard and his friends have already interfered too much in Romulan government, and he should stay out of it if he doesn't want to be arrested as well. Spock attempts to visit Donatra in jail, but finds her dead by apparent suicide (something which no-one believes). With Donatra's death, Tal'Aura reclaims the worlds of the upstart Imperial Romulan State and smugly declares the Romulan nation to be whole again. Having successfully eliminated Rehaek, Sela is promoted to head of the Tal Shiar. Tzenkethi representative Alizome Tor Fel-A comes to congratulate Praetor Tal'Aura on the reunification, and the next morning, Tal'Aura is also found dead of a previously undetected disease...

TTN 2x21 - "TIME DRIVE"

After Daiyar raided the Eridian Vault and made off with the Time Drive, Starfleet assign *Titan* to give chase with the DTI's help. Daiyar actually works for the Aegis (the future agency from TOS "Assignment Earth"), but went rogue. She stole the Time Drive to go back in time and destroy the Fethetrit before they ravage her homeworld. But that bloodthirsty race are now a beneficial member of the Pa'haquel alliance (TTN "Orion's Hounds"), hence the Aegis not wanting Daiyar to interfere. Ranjea convinces the Aegis to work with them, even if it means protecting a horrible past. Riker boggles at the number of groups out there messing around with history, and realises how important the DTI's work is to protect the Federation. Meanwhile having escaped the Time Lock, Lucsly secretly invites his equally dull and uninteresting counterparts from the Klingons, Sheliak, Ferengi, Vonnin and even the Typhon Pact to the Eridian Vault. What are they up to?

VOY 11x21 - "THE ETERNAL TIDE"

Reactions to Janeway's return vary. The Doctor questions and scans. Chakotay rages at a presumed imposter. Eden is terrified - this is her nightmare come to life. But any long explanations

must wait - responding to *Quirinal's* distress call, *Voyager* finds her four sister ships half-swallowed by the Darkness. *Achilles* transports survivors to safety and immediately sets course for Earth. Inside the anomaly, *Hawking's* Captain Itak finds Tallar, one of Eden's fathers. He understands that their presence here increases the anomaly's power - Itak realises that they must destroy themselves to stop that from happening. *Voyager* is able to contact Eden's other father Jobin, who is trying to rescue Tallar. Between both men and their daughter, the crew concludes that the anomaly is equal and opposite to the Q Continuum, pure destruction balancing their pure creation - the Omega Continuum. *Quirinal, Esquiline, Hawking* and *Curie* all self-destruct at the cost of 700 lives but returning Omega to its stable state. But Eden knows this is not the end...

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT

The Starfleet ship *Robinson*, and a Tholian vessel, both hanging over Andor, as if that damaged blue-white world is caught between the two opposing forces...

NEWSREADER (v.o.)

After these explosive revelations from the Tholian Assembly, the already heightened tensions here on Andor are sure to rise higher.

2 EXT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA BUILDING - DAY

Outside the Parliament, two crowds of Andorian EXTRAS are protesting loudly - one in favour of the Federation, the other against. The Andorian Guard EXTRAS are finding it increasingly difficult to keep the two groups separate...

NEWSREADER (v.o.)

The scene outside Parliament and all Starfleet installations is one of intense activity, as hundreds of citizens demand answers in the wake of this controversial news.

3 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - PRESIDER'S OFFICE

Andorian presider SH'THALIS, security minister CH'LHREN, and Starfleet captain SISKO stand watching this news report on a big screen, as it shows live images from outside...

NEWSREADER (comm)

All requests for interviews with the Presider or any member of her administration, however, continue to go unanswered.

SH'THALIS

(w/ disgust)

End transmission.

The screen goes blank, but the NOISE of the protesters can still be heard from outside. sh'Thalis stalks back to her crescent-shaped desk - Sisko and ch'Lhren follow.

The door opens and Commodore THIRIN, head of the Andorian Guard, enters, dragging a clearly distressed Professor ZH'THIIN by the arm. zh'Thiin pulls her arm free and stands before sh'Thalis, who is not pleased to see her.

ZH'THIIN

Let go of me! I said I'd come.

SH'THALIS

Professor zh'Thiin. Thank you for coming. Explain yourself, please.

ZH'THIIN

Presider, I must apologise. But I promise, I knew nothing about it.

SISKO

You had no idea the information for your experiments was coming from the Tholians?

ZH'THIIN

No. My only contact was with a Gallamite, a man called Sintay. He found me, told me he had access to information that might be of use -

SH'THALIS

And you never knew his clients were the Tholians?

ZH'THIIN

Never. Anonymity was a condition of our "partnership". But once I saw the potential of it, I could hardly turn down the opportunity.

CH'LHREN

But why would the Tholians help us at all? Correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't they now members of an alliance that stands against us?

SISKO

It's not that clear-cut. Some members of the Typhon Pact have been openly aggressive towards the Federation, but others are taking a more measured approach.

ZH'THIIN

Perhaps the Tholians are genuine in their claims of wanting a new era of cooperation, then.

SISKO

It's possible. But Starfleet only found out about the Typhon Pact because the Tholians launched a plot to destabilise the Khitomer Accords and get the Federation fighting amongst itself.

THIRIN

And they've accomplished the same here, with their... "gift" to the professor. Those protesters out there are demanding that you expel all non-Andorians from the planet.

(shakes head,
sighs)

This announcement has played right into the *Treishya's* plans.

That gets sh'Thalis's attention...

SH'THALIS

Are you suggesting the *Treishya* and the Tholians planned this whole thing together?

CH'LHREN

I have nothing to support that.

THIRIN

But we can't rule it out. There's more - I've been reconsidering the *Treishya's* three attacks so far.

SISKO

They were all at joint Starfleet
-Andorian facilities. That fits
their desire to come between us.

THIRIN

Yes, but there's more to it than
that. The first attack was here,
at the Parliament, where we intend
to hold the conference. We said
then that it may have just been a
test of our responses.

SH'THALIS

Okay...

THIRIN

The second was at the Aenar city
excavation in the Northern Wastes
- a project that vanishingly few
people knew about, and even fewer
knew that Starfleet officers had
been invited to observe.

SH'THALIS

I handed Lieutenant ch'Thane that
invitation myself...

THIRIN

Indeed. And the third attack, at
the atmospheric processing plant,
where they somehow knew all our
most secure computer protocols.

sh'Thalis blanches - as much as an Andorian can.

SH'THALIS

You're suggesting they have help
from inside this Parliament?

THIRIN

I'm not suggesting it, Presider. I
am stating it as incontrovertible
fact. It's the only explanation
that fits all the information.

(deep breath)

Nor would it be the first time. To my own personal embarrassment, my former second was revealed to be a *Treishya* sympathiser after their attack on the Science Institute.

SISKO

Presider, if you won't cancel the conference, or relocate it to the *Robinson*, can I at least suggest that you delay it? Give my people time to redesign the security protocols, toughen our defences.

THIRIN

Such a delay would also give my people time to hunt down anyone helping the *Treishya* from within your administration.

sh'Thalis pauses to consider...

SH'THALIS

Very well. That is a sensible course. But no more than a day. Captain, you have that long to make your changes. And Commodore, if we have traitors in our midst, you have that long to find them.

THIRIN

Understood, Presider.

Ending on Minister ch'Lhren, covering a sly smile...

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - DAY

The centre of Federation government in Paris...

5 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

President BACCO stands from her desk. Admiral AKAAR stands just behind and to her side, supporting. They both face...

...Tholian Ambassador TEZRENE (13x10 "The Typhon Pact"), as the environment-suited alien sweeps into the room. Bacco's personal protection agent WEXLER shuts the door behind her.

BACCO

You know, for a people who value
punctuality so highly, you sure do
like to keep other people waiting.

The metallic SHRIEK of the Tholian's voice is translated into a robotic monotone by the device on her enviro-suit.

TEZRENE

I apologise for the delay, Madam
President. I was, sadly, detained
by urgent matters of state.

BACCO

Yes, you have been busy, haven't
you? That was quite the proverbial
bombshell you dropped on Andor.

TEZRENE

We prefer to think of it as
helping a neighbour in need. We
celebrate the progress Professor
zh'Thiin has made with the limited
information we provided to her.

AKAAR

So, to clarify... you did not give
the professor a complete record of
the Shedai meta-genome data?

TEZRENE

Correct. The professor's success represents only a fraction of the data's potential. Its full power has yet to be unleashed.

In such a monotonous, inflection-free voice, that can only possibly come across as a threat. Bacco darkens...

BACCO

That's a very magnanimous gesture on your part, Ambassador. But tell me - why not approach us directly? It seems like this is exactly the kind of collaborative venture that has eluded us all these years.

TEZRENE

My government saw nothing to be gained by taking such action.

BACCO

So all of this - the theatrics, the lurking in the shadows, coming out on the interstellar stage - it was just to prove how much you can stick it to the Federation?

TEZRENE

Your arrogance continues unabated, Madam President. As we have tried to communicate to you in the past, our goal is to benefit our people. Any effects the attaining of those goals may have upon the Federation in general, and you in particular, are secondary in nature... though they do not go unappreciated.

(beat)

As I expect we have nothing more to discuss, Madam President, I will now take my leave of you.

Tezrene ambles towards the exit, but Bacco gestures to Wexler, who does *not* open the door. Tezrene turns again...

BACCO

Just one more thing before you go, Ambassador. It's possible I was being too subtle earlier, so allow me to explain - I don't like to be kept waiting. I don't tolerate it from people I like, so you can imagine how I feel about anyone else. While you're on my planet, enjoying the hospitality of my people, if I call for you, you'd damn well better be here before the echo dies. Am I being clear?

There is a long pause while Tezrene considers this...

TEZRENE

Duly noted, Madam President.

At Bacco's nod, Wexler opens the door and Tezrene sweeps out. Wexler joins her, leaving Bacco and Akaar alone. She slumps back into her seat, he offers a tiny smile...

AKAAR

And I always thought I was the diplomatic one.

BACCO

(sigh)

Don't you start. I've already got the Cardassians, the Romulans and the Andorians conspiring to push my headache up from level three all the way to level six, and now there's the Tholians on top...

(rubs temples)

Where are we with the Cardassians anyway? Anything from Garak?

AKAAR

(shakes head)

Speaking of being kept waiting...

Bacco mutters under her breath...

6 **EXT. SPACE - ARGAYA ORBIT**

The colonist convoy, the *Defiant*, the Cardassian ships...

7 **INT. DEFIANT - READY ROOM**

RO sits behind the desk, talking via the comm screen to QUARK, who is in his quarters on DS9...

RO

I don't know what else I can do,
Quark. I've got a couple thousand
refugees here, and they've been
stuck on those ships for days.

QUARK (screen)

Must be getting pretty ripe.

RO

I've been beaming them over a few
at a time, letting them take a
shower, eat a decent meal. And
I've beamed onto every ship to
talk to them in person, explain
what's going on. But I'm afraid if
something doesn't change soon,
I'll have a riot on my hands.

QUARK (screen)

So change something.

RO

Like what? I've yelled at Akaar,
I've yelled at Macet, I've almost
gone to war with Mogad... what
else is there?

QUARK (screen)

Laren, you know I love you. But
can you really not come up with
anything but yelling or shooting?

RO

(derisive)

And I suppose you'd just beam down
there, make a deal with Macet.

QUARK (screen)
(exasperated)
Yes! Talk to him, for Gint's sake.
Figure out what he wants, what he
really really wants, then figure
out how to make it happen.

Ro sits back, struck by the simplicity of that idea.

RO
Ro to Candlewood - report to my
ready room please.

CANDLEWOOD (comm)
On my way, Commander.

Quark looks back at her proudly...

8 EXT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - DAY

Back to the centre of Andorian government, with the ever-growing crowds of protesters outside...

9 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - ATRIUM

A spacious, sunny atrium. Conference DELEGATES - a medley of important scientists, journalists and curious amateurs - process through the security barriers, individual scanning booths between impenetrable transparent aluminium walls.

Andorian Guard officers take the lead in running this operation, with Starfleet officers as back-up. All is calm, although we can HEAR the sound of the protesters outside.

Captain Sisko, Commodore Thirin and Professor zh'Thiin stand together, observing the arrangements. With them are some of the *Robinson's* senior staff - security chief UTELN, chief engineer RELKDAHZ (seen in 13x06) and science officer SHAR - plus the visitors from DS9 - BASHIR, NOG and TENMEI.

SISKO
Alright, listen up. The Tholians
have left the system - now they've
dropped their bomb, they're happy
to let us pick up the pieces.

THIRIN

It will not be easy. We can assume the *Treishya* will not waste this opportunity, so my Guardsmen will join the security team from the *Robinson* and be on constant alert.

UTELN

Our comms are on a random rotating frequency to which only Commodore th'Deminesh and I have the key, so even if they crack one frequency, they shouldn't be able to block it for more than a few moments.

RELKDAHZ

And these security barriers are built to the highest standards Starfleet knows how to build. The conference delegates will be safe.

SISKO

Thank you, Commanders. Lieutenant ch'Thane, Doctor Bashir - you'll be inside the auditorium with Professor zh'Thiin and myself.

SHAR

Understood, Captain.

NOG

What about us? How can we help?

THIRIN

With respect, Commander Nog, you and Lieutenant Tenmei were not included in the security plans I drew up with Commander Rogeiro. And I'd rather not change those plans at such a late date.

SISKO

You'll be safer on the *Robinson*. I'm sure Commander Rogeiro can find something to keep you busy.

RELKDAHZ
Just don't break my engine room.

Everyone chuckles - all except a very pensive Shar...

10 **EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT**

A Starfleet runabout flies up from the planet's surface, heading for orbit...

11 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Tenmei piloting, Nog next to her, worried...

NOG
I'm worried about Shar.

TENMEI
What about him?

NOG
I've been trying to convince him he needs to come back home - not even so much to help his people, more to help himself.

TENMEI
Okay, and?

NOG
And, I thought when he saw that ancient Aenar city, that would have been the clincher - the home run, as Jake would have said. But ever since those Tholians showed up, he's just shut down again. Seems less interested than ever.

TENMEI
This is Shar we're talking about, Nog. He internalises. He never talks about himself - unlike his successor, who just blurts out anything that crosses his mind.

Nog chuckles...

TENMEI

I just want him to be happy. I'll support whatever makes him happy. Even if that means leaving again.

NOG

Yeah... me too.

Through the front windows, they see the *Robinson* growing nearer. Tenmei manoeuvres to approach from the rear...

TENMEI

Robinson, this is *Rio Grande*, requesting permission to dock.

ROGEIRO (comm)

Permission granted, *Rio Grande*.

Ahead of them, the enormous Galaxy-class ship looms...

12 EXT. SPACE - ROBINSON AND RUNABOUT

The ship's gigantic main shuttlebay door OPENS... and the runabout glides in smoothly through the blue force field.

13 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - CH'LHREN'S OFFICE

Minister ch'Lhren enters his office, closes the door, opens his desk drawer, takes out the private computer, unlocks it with a retina scan - all the same as in 13x20.

The processed VOICE that issues from the computer is the same one that gave the speeches on behalf of the *Treishya* in 13x20, although with a more conversational tone now.

VOICE (comm)

Well? How are things proceeding?

CH'LHREN

As expected. They figured out we have an agent inside, but not who it is yet. And they have changed all their security protocols.

VOICE (comm)
But you have the key, don't you?

CH' LHREN
Naturally, the moment they entered
it. Still, I can't help wondering
if this is the right path.

VOICE (comm)
Is your commitment wavering?

CH' LHREN
Of course not - my loyalty to the
Treishya is as steadfast as ever.
But the Tholians! Doesn't that
change things? We had no idea -

VOICE (comm)
The Tholians have handed us a
golden opportunity, whether they
intended to or not. The people are
more agitated than ever, exactly
as we need them to be. We would be
foolish not to take this chance
for our cause while we can.

CH' LHREN
Very well. We continue as planned.

VOICE (comm)
We continue... as planned.

The voice signs off, and ch'Lhren sits pondering...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

14 INT. DS9 - CANDLEWOOD'S QUARTERS

HETIK has been eagerly awaiting a comm from his boyfriend CANDLEWOOD, who is calling from his *Defiant* quarters...

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
Hey, I've got great news!

HETIK
Oh, thank the Prophets. Starfleet finally came to their senses and gave up on trying to appease the Cardassians.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
What? Oh no, not that. That's still dragging on.

After Hetik had put aside his annoyance in 13x20, and been looking forward to talking to his boyfriend, Candlewood's dismissiveness now brings back the annoyance full force.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
(continuing)
But Ro went down to Argaya to talk to Macet in person, and she left me in charge. Me! John Candlewood is in command of the *Defiant*!

HETIK
You're in command of the *Defiant*. That's what you're calling about?

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
Well, yeah! I've been trying to push myself further, but this whole invasion-refugee business has really given me the chance to strut my stuff. Now look at me!

Hetik can barely believe what he's hearing. He has to step away, pace a bit, but his anger is growing regardless...

HETIK

John, do you even hear yourself?
You're there right now with the
lives of thousands in your hands,
Starfleet is tying itself in knots
to get the Cardassians to actually
care about anyone but themselves,
but your main concern is boasting
to me about how the slaughter of
billions worked to your benefit?

On screen, Candlewood is entirely blindsided by this...

CANDLEWOOD (screen)

Wha-... I was just trying to tell
you a good thing -

HETIK

No, you were being thoughtless and
self-centred. That's who you are,
John, and sometimes it's cute -

CANDLEWOOD (screen)

(rallies)

Hey, just hold on a minute! Self-
centred? I'm a Starfleet officer,
Hetik. I've dedicated my life to -

HETIK

To doing whatever the Cardassians
want, yeah, I know. I still can't
believe the Federation wants them
of all people in their alliance.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)

Would you rather we have another
war?

HETIK

I'd rather Starfleet not suck up
to the same empire that left me
just as orphaned and homeless as
all those people you're supposed
to be taking care of right now!

The confession out, Hetik takes a moment to regather. But Candlewood seems to grasp Hetik's issue at last...

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
You think I don't care about you?

HETIK
Do you?

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
(offended)
Of course! More than anything! But I also have a job to do. And my orders are to protect these people until Ro sorts it out with Macet.

HETIK
You could just take them somewhere else, somewhere safe. Give them their promised land. That's what you said you wanted.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
There is nowhere else, Hetik! The Typhon Pact has made sure of that. That's why we need Cardassia.

Hetik pauses, faces the enormity of the moment...

HETIK
Then I guess we don't have anything else to talk about.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
Wait, no -

But Hetik has already cut the signal. He sits back...

15 EXT. SPACE - ARGAYA ORBIT

The Cardassian ships, the *Defiant*, and the convoy...

16 INT. ARGAYA BASE - LEGATE'S OFFICE

Ro sits across the desk from Legate MACET, with EVIK stood by the window, out of uniform.

RO

What do you want? That's what this all ultimately comes down to.

MACET

I don't understand.

EVIK

If I may, Legate, Commander Ro is correct. I believe - and I'm glad to see her embracing my philosophy - that any two parties can settle their differences by talking. By locating the deepest core of each party's issue, and resolving it.

RO

Exactly. Strip away all the pride and ego, just let me know what you need. I'll do the same. Then we figure out how to make it happen.

MACET

We... make a deal.

EVIK

It's the Ferengi way. And they've managed to sign up to the Khitomer Accords, so maybe they've got the right idea. But since we have no Ferengi to hand, I'll have to do.

RO

So... what do you want, Macet?

Macet sits pondering the question...

17 INT. ROBINSON - BRIDGE

Cmdr Rogeiro confers MOS with the officer replacing Uteln at tactical, a human female named DeSANTIS.

He turns at the sound of the turbolift arriving - NOG strides out.

ROGEIRO

Commander Nog. What brings you to the *Robinson's* bridge?

NOG

Honestly, just restlessness. I'm not used to having nothing to do.

ROGEIRO

I can certainly empathise. It goes against all my training to allow the captain to be off the ship.

NOG

It's Captain Sisko. And between us and the Andorians, there's a small army down there. It'll be fine.

Suddenly all the LIGHTS around the bridge FLICKER, and the background HUM of the engines stutters. Nog hangs his head.

NOG

Damn it, I have got to stop saying that.

ROGEIRO

Commander Plante, what's going on?

The human female at Ops, PLANTE, checks her console...

PLANTE

I'm registering power fluctuations all across the ship.

Then all power dies out. A second of disorienting darkness, then EMERGENCY POWER returns the bridge to dim, low light. DeSantis quickly checks her console...

DeSANTIS

Sir, I'm locked out of all primary systems, including weapons and defences. They're all offline.

NOG

How is that even possible?

ROGEIRO

Computer, restore full access to primary systems. Authorisation Rogeiro three-seven-gamma-echo.

COMPUTER

Unable to comply.

DeSANTIS

Sir! We're receiving a hail from the surface, but I can't pinpoint the source. It's bouncing through the global satellite network.

ROGEIRO

(gritted teeth)

Put it through, Ensign.

A moment, and the same processed, disguised VOICE speaks.

VOICE (comm)

Greetings, Commander Anxo Rogeiro.

ROGEIRO

Who are you, and what do you want?

VOICE (comm)

I speak for the *Treishya*, and I want to tell you to take your ship away from my planet, and do not return. You have been given ample opportunity to leave in peace, and you have not done so. Therefore I am taking more aggressive action.

ROGEIRO

Aggressive? From what I've seen you are a coward, content to lurk in the shadows and hide your face.

VOICE (comm)

I do not require your affirmation, Commander. I am in full control of your vessel. Failure to follow my instructions is... ill-advised.

ROGEIRO

My captain and a large portion of
my crew are still on the surface.
I will not leave without them.

A new ALERT on the engineering console - Nog checks...

NOG

The primary antimatter containment
systems have gone off-line! Back-
ups are deactivating too.

VOICE (comm)

If you do not set course and leave
Andor immediately, I will destroy
your ship with my entire world
watching. Decide, Commander. Now.

Off Rogeiro's seething at his apparent helplessness...

18 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - ENCLAVE CHAMBER

The large main chamber where government ministers usually
meet, now turned over to the conference. Professor ZH'THIIN
stands behind a podium on the stage, a complex genetic data
GRAPHIC hovering in hologram form next to her...

ZH'THIIN

And that, my friends, is where
Andorian babies come from.

CHUCKLES and APPLAUSE from the crowd. zh'Thiin bows and
heads off stage into the wings, where the others await...

ZH'THIIN

Well? How did I do?

BASHIR

Informative and entertaining - a
sweet spot I've never managed.

ZH'THIIN

You're up next, Lieutenant.

Shar nods, clearly not relishing the idea. Before he can
move, Lt Cmdr UTELN sidles up to Sisko, clearly worried...

UTELN

Captain, have you been in contact with the *Robinson*?

SISKO

No. Why, is there a problem?

UTELN

That is the problem, sir. I can't raise the ship, and neither can any of my team.

Off everyone's worry...

19 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - ATRIUM

Where Commodore Thirin stands with his Guards, alarmed and shouting into a wrist comm...

THIRIN

This is th'Deminesh to Sisko, to Utehn, to anyone! Security grid is down, forcefields are inactive, weapons are neutralised, and there is action at all checkpoints!

(no response)

Frabjel!

Frustrated, he lowers his wrist and turns to his Guards.

THIRIN

Everything's down, and I can't get in touch with anyone. We have to assume the *Treishya* are moving. Our priority is to protect the people in the auditorium. But do it non-lethally - don't hand the *Treishya* any more propaganda.

At his nod, the Guards distribute themselves around the atrium area to protect the enclave chamber.

Just in time, as a flood of agitated Andorian civilians burst through, all yelling and running straight for them...

20 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - ENCLAVE CHAMBER

At the SOUND of angry protesters and fighters, the gathered delegates start to clamour with worry. Without reports, Sisko *et al* have no option but to assume the worst...

SISKO

We need to protect the delegates.
Commander Utehn?

UTELN

Aye, sir.

Utehn heads off to gather and deploy the Andorian Guards and Starfleet security officers dispersed around the room.

SISKO

We also need to get you out and
somewhere secure, Professor.

SHAR

I will go with you - I know a safe
route back to the Institute. But
what about you, Captain?

SISKO

I'm not abandoning my people.

BASHIR

You may need a doctor as well.

They all share a moment, then Sisko and Bashir turn to join the security forces, even as the NOISE from outside builds.

Meanwhile, Shar firmly takes zh'Thiin's hand and leads her into the darkest corridors of the Parliament building...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

21 EXT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA BUILDING - DAY

The scene outside the Parliament has fallen into chaos. The CROWDS of protesting EXTRAS have been let loose, rampaging through the grounds and into the building itself.

The Andorian Guard EXTRAS are overwhelmed, outnumbered and trampled under the onslaught, their weapons useless.

Police aircars, as seen in 12x05, loom overhead, harsh and guttural orders being announced and ignored...

22 EXT. ANDORIAN TENEMENT - DAY

And we catch up to the opening scene of 13x19. With these sounds in the background, Shar and zh'Thiin are in the alley, surrounded by unhappy Andorian civilians...

YOUNG THAAN

You're not welcome on this planet.
Either of you. You're both
traitors to Andorians everywhere.

SHOPKEEPER

Maybe we shouldn't let you leave.

He pulls zh'Thiin closer to him, trying to keep her safe.

SHAR

If it's a fight you want, I'm more
than happy to provide it.

YOUNG THAAN

You can't fight us all.

SHAR

No... but I can kill you first.

Provoked, the *thaan* lunges... and Shar is ready for him.

EVADE the attack... PUNCH in the ribs... TWIST the arm up the back... KICK his knees out... zh'Thiin YELPS...

Shar has the *thaan* neutralised in moments, just like the intruder at the Parliament. But the others are advancing...

A SHADOW falls over the entire scene, an OFFICER bellows...

OFFICER (o.s.)
Everyone stay where you are!

In the kerfuffle, they had not noticed the police aircar approaching, the Andorian Guard officer striding into the alleyway, a posse of guards at his back, weapons drawn.

OFFICER
(to Shar, re *thaan*)
Let him go.

Unsure which way this will go, Shar does as instructed. As the *thaan* staggers away, the Officer points at him...

OFFICER
Take him into custody. Disorderly conduct, assault, incitement.

The guards grab the young *thaan*. The Shopkeeper protests...

SHOPKEEPER
He didn't do anything wrong!
(re Shar)
You saw what he did. Why aren't you arresting him?

OFFICER
(threatening)
This incident is over. Leave now, or you'll be arrested too.

Grudgingly, they do disperse back into their buildings.

OFFICER
Are you alright, Lieutenant?
Professor?

ZH'THIIN
I think we're fine, officer...?

OFFICER
th'Zarista. I just wanted you both
to know that not everyone you meet
is against you. My *shei* recently
turned three thanks to you.

This is difficult for Shar, given his own family died...

SHAR
I'm happy for you.

OFFICER
You should go, find somewhere
safe. I'll finish up here.

ZH'THIIN
Thank you, officer. And please
wish your *shei* a happy birthday.

Shar and zh'Thiin hold hands and run on down the alley, but
the NOISE of riots in the background is still ongoing...

23 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - ENCLAVE CHAMBER

This SOUND is also relayed into the enclave chamber, even
as Sisko and Uteln barricade one of the doors. They look
down to the centre of the chamber, where Andorian Guards
circle the conference delegates while Bashir keeps watch...

SISKO
How the hell did someone get into
the grid again?

HAMMERING on the door, muffled voice from the other side...

THIRIN (o.s.)
th'Deminesh! Filana-jatai!

UTELN
That's the code...

At Sisko's nod, Uteln readies his weapon just in case...
Sisko YANKS the door open...

...and Commodore Thirin barrels in, escaping the obvious
chaos outside. Sisko quickly SLAMS the door behind him.

THIRIN

They're just roaming aimlessly.
Not even trying to break in.

UTELN

That doesn't make sense. Why would
someone disable our security, cut
off our communications, neutralise
our weapons, just so the locals
can run around and tear up the
grass, maybe break a few windows?

THIRIN

I'm starting to think the *Treishya*
aren't even here. This is all a
distraction. Throw open the doors,
let the protesters riot, so we're
caught up trying to control them
while they're somewhere else.

SISKO

Does anyone know if the Presider
is safe?

THIRIN

(w/ horror)

Uzaveh...

Thirin turns and YANKS open the door again, makes to run
out into the crowd...

...only to find a wildly grinning PROTESTER right there in
his face, KNIFE at the ready...

...and the knife PLUNGES into Thirin's belly. He SCREAMS...

Sisko CATCHES the falling Andorian, drags him back into the
enclave chamber...

SISKO

Doctor Bashir!

Uteln CLUBS the protester on the head, knocking the knife
skittering to the floor...

...GRABS the protester and the knife, pulls them both back into the chamber, SLAMS the door behind them...

BASHIR and two Starfleet security come running. Bashir goes straight to Thirin, Utehn orders the two security...

UTELN

You - tie him up, take the knife.
You - barricade the door...

BASHIR

(over Thirin)
Give me space, I need to see what I'm working with...
(taps combadge)
Bashir to *Robinson*, respond!
(nothing)
Damn it, where are they?

As Bashir struggles to keep Thirin from bleeding out...

24 EXT. SPACE - ROBINSON

The Galaxy-class ship is moving at low impulse AWAY from Andor, which grows further in the distance...

25 INT. ROBINSON - ENGINEERING

Still in low light emergency mode, and busy with *Robinson's* engineering EXTRAS scanning every console and machine with their tricorders. Into the chaos, enter NOG and TENMEI...

NOG

Somebody report!

Lt GSELLMAN (human female, seen 13x06) sees this unfamiliar Ferengi, but he's in uniform, and has Lt Cmdr's pips, so...

GSELLMAN

Sir! Antimatter containment came back online once we left orbit. Most systems are back to normal.

TENMEI

Most?

GSELLMAN

We don't have weapons or shields.

NOG

We need to get back to the planet,
Captain Sisko and Lieutenant
ch'Thane need our help...

GSELLMAN

Sir, I have no reason to think
this *Treishya* guy, whoever he was,
won't try to blow up the warp core
again the moment we turn around.

TENMEI

Then we need to get back control
of the ship. He must have planted
a device, infiltrated the computer
somehow...

GSELLMAN

(gestures around)

That's why I have every available
crew member searching.

SCALIN

Found it!

The Bajoran crewman SCALIN (the one Rogeiro yelled at) was scanning the Master Systems Display with his tricorder. He gets down on his knees, reaches into the dark corners...

...and comes back with the DEVICE ch'Lhren planted there in 13x20, beaming. He quickly hands it to Nog, who scans it...

NOG

Excellent work, crewman.

TENMEI

Anything interesting on there?

NOG

Wiped clean. It must have inserted
a data-worm into the computer then
shut itself down, so we couldn't
use it against them.

GSELLMAN

Then we're no better off. These computers are huge. Whatever they put in could be hidden anywhere.

SCALIN

Level-one diagnostic?

NOG

Ordinarily yes, but... whoever did this is a computer genius. They'd know all the usual responses. We need another operating system...

Tenmei's eyes suddenly flare with inspiration, and she takes off pelting down the corridor. Nog gets it, already halfway after her, but one last order for Gsellman...

NOG

Lieutenant, get ready to perform a full system shutdown and reboot of the *Robinson's* computer. But not before my signal!

Then he is gone too. Gsellman beckons Scaline with her...

26 INT. ROBINSON - CORRIDOR

Nog catches up to Tenmei as they run down the corridor...

NOG

The runabout, right?

TENMEI

Different prefix code, shouldn't be affected by whatever infected the *Robinson*. It'll never run a whole Galaxy-class ship -

NOG

- but it doesn't need to. It just needs to run a few major systems, enough to give Commander Rogeiro control of the ship.

TENMEI

I just hope Shar's okay. God only knows what the *Treishya* are doing down there...

As they turn a corner, **MATCH CUT** to:

27 **INT. ANDORIAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE - CORRIDOR**

Shar and zh'Thiin SCREECH to a halt, faced with a large weapon being pointed in their faces by a beefy OLDER THAAN. Meanwhile a younger *chan* is working to open the door to zh'Thiin's laboratory. Shar's arrival interrupted them...

OLDER THAAN

Get off our planet.

SHAR

Your planet? I'm a citizen of this world as well, in case the obvious escaped you.

OLDER THAAN

You abandoned your birthright the moment you put on that uniform.

(to zh'Thiin)

And you - you're no better than he is. Polluting our children with that alien filth.

ZH'THIIN

That's not what I'm doing.

SHAR

Don't waste your voice, Professor. He doesn't have the minimum number of functioning brain cells needed to understand such long words.

Provoked again, the older *thaan* steps closer...

OLDER THAAN

I understand plenty. If we are meant to survive, Uzaveh will show us the way. Otherwise, I accept the fate he ordained for me.

SHAR

Then what are you waiting for? Put that in your mouth right now, and pull the trigger.

OLDER THAAN

(re weapon)

Ha! This isn't -

Shar KICKS the older *thaan* in the groin... the *thaan* crumples... Shar SNATCHES the weapon off him...

...and FIRES. The weapon shoots a small PROJECTILE that hits the *chan* in the chest, and he slumps to the deck.

Then Shar CLUBS the *thaan* over the head with the weapon, and he too hits the ground. zh'Thiin YELPS...

ZH'THIIN

Did you kill them?

SHAR

No. When he stepped close, I could read the writing on the weapon. Sedatives only. Non-lethal, if we can believe that. Others may come - help me get them inside.

Shaken by all the violence, zh'Thiin unlocks the door, then takes the *chan's* arms while Shar takes his legs...

27 INT. ROBINSON - MAIN SHUTTLE BAY

Tenmei is outside the runabout, taking cables that snake out of an open panel on the runabout's hull and connecting them into an open panel in the bay's deck. She TWISTS the last one into place, SHOUTS through the open hatch...

TENMEI

How's that?

28 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

...where Nog is working the runabout's computers, fingers flying over the controls as fast as he can...

NOG
Got it! Now get in here!

Tenmei appears through the hatch, moves to join him...

TENMEI
How much longer?

NOG
If we rush it, we might trip an alarm. And then somebody might decide to blow up the ship. And that would be bad.

He gestures to a GRAPHIC, displaying a system network...

NOG
Once I establish a link between the runabout and the *Robinson's* protected back-up core, I should be able to connect to the shuttles and slave all their computers to this one. Once that network's up, it should only take a few seconds to switch out the *Robinson's* operating system for ours.

TENMEI
Giving us time to reboot the main computer from scratch -

NOG
- and wipe out the *Treishya's* bug.

TENMEI
Then we have control of the ship, and we can go back for Shar.

NOG
That's the plan. Nearly there...
(off panels)
Uh-oh.

TENMEI
I beg your pardon?

Nog points at the new information running on the display...

NOG

Look! New instructions being sent
to the engineering sub-processes.
I must have tripped something...

TENMEI

It's querying the status of the
antimatter containment systems.
They know what we're trying to do.
Nog, we have to do this right now.

NOG

Shouldn't we at least warn the
bridge first?

TENMEI

Why spoil the surprise?

Tenmei reaches past Nog...

...and hits the button that says EXECUTE.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

29 EXT. SPACE - ROBINSON

Still flying away from Andor...

30 INT. ROBINSON - ENGINEERING

In the chief engineer's office area, Gsellman works hard on her consoles. Scalin shouts from another station...

SCALIN

Lieutenant! The containment -

GSELLMAN

I know! I'm trying to block the commands but -

The low emergency lights die, dropping them into DARKNESS. Screens SCRAMBLE. The HUM of the warp core fluctuates. Even the artificial gravity hiccups, making the crew STAGGER.

Gsellman and Scalin watch one last screen as it fills with status indicators managing a flood of new instructions... then that last screen goes DARK too. A moment...

...and the entire ship BLOOMS back to life with full power. All screens, all lights, warp core - all gleaming bright. As EXTRAS celebrate, Gsellman's screen reads...

USS RIO GRANDE NCC-72452
MAIN NETWORK ENABLED

31 INT. ROBINSON - BRIDGE

This same message is also displayed on the tactical console - Rogeiro and DeSantis gaze upon it with confusion.

NOG (comm)

Nog to bridge - you should have full control now. Can you confirm?

ROGEIRO

All stations report.

While Rogeiro moves to the command chair, they do so...

GSELLMAN (comm)
Antimatter containment protocols
are back online.

PLANTE
Communications are coming back.

DeSANTIS
Defensive systems still running
up, should be about a minute.

32 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Nog and Tenmei HIGH-FIVE and BUTT-BUMP in celebration...

NOG
Yes! Whew!

...then they both spontaneously go into John Candlewood's
famously awful "I Am So Awesome" dance...

TENMEI / NOG
(tuneless singing)
We are so awesome, we are so
awesome...

ROGEIRO (comm)
Uh, Commander? Lieutenant?

They realise in horror that the comm line is still open...

NOG
Hmm-hmm. Yes. Sorry. Engineering,
please begin full reboot of main
computer, then reinstall from
protected back-ups. That is...
with your approval, bridge?

33 INT. ROBINSON - BRIDGE

While the rest of the bridge crew smirks, Rogeiro settles
firmly into the command seat, determined.

ROGEIRO

Approval very much given, Mister
Nog - as well as my thanks. Helm,
full about, back to Andor.

SIVADEKI

Aye, sir.

DeSANTIS

Commander! Reading two Andorian
Guard vessels on an intercept
course with the *Robinson*.

ROGEIRO

Will our defensive systems be back
online by the time they reach us?

DeSANTIS

Definitely, sir.

ROGEIRO

Then let them do their worst.

Off Rogeiro's grim determination...

34 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - ENCLAVE CHAMBER

Commodore THIRIN groans gruesomely as blue blood leaks from
his abdomen, despite Doctor Bashir's best efforts.

SISKO

Doctor, can you help him?

BASHIR

I expected to talk today, Captain,
not perform emergency surgery. I
don't even have a medkit! I need
the *Robinson's* sickbay.

UTELN

Will the Parliament infirmary do?

BASHIR

If we can reach it without being
overwhelmed by protesters, yes.

SISKO

Leave that to me. Mister Uteln,
you're in charge here, but I'll
need two security with me.

UTELN

(shouts, beckoning)
Stannis! Rogers!

An Orion male and a human female come running. Meanwhile Sisko helps Bashir to manoeuvre Thirin up as vertical as they can get him...

Stannis takes point, useless phaser at the ready... Uteln opens the door, and Sisko's party heads out...

35 INT. ANDORIAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE - LABORATORY

Shar and zh'Thiin have completed tying up the two *Treishya* agents using the cords from her subordinates' white lab coats. The young *chan* remains unconscious, but the older *thaan* is groggily awake enough to hiss in disgust...

OLDER THAAN

Traitor.

SHAR

What did you say?

OLDER THAAN

You... you forsake your own kind
for those who would destroy us.
You're worse than she is.

SHAR

You'd really rather die than take
any option, any help to save us?

OLDER THAAN

Uzaveh will save us!

SHAR

Has it never occurred to you that
Uzaveh wants us to save ourselves,
and that Professor zh'Thiin may be
the vessel of that salvation?

ZH'THIIN

Ignore him, Lieutenant. I'm more interested in why he was sent here with sedatives, not disruptors.

OLDER THAAN

We were sent to capture you, not to kill you.

SHAR

I thought you wanted us off your planet? Make your minds up.

The *thaan* SPITS at Shar. Shar raises the weapon and SHOOTS the *thaan* with a sedative dart - he slumps unconscious.

ZH'THIIN

Lieutenant... Thirishar...

The use of Shar's personal name gets his attention...

ZH'THIIN

(continuing)

You know he's wrong, don't you?
He's the traitor, not you.

SHAR

I know. Twice, I allowed my guilt to drive me away from my home. I will not be driven away a third time by the likes of him.

ZH'THIIN

(hesitant)

And... do you really believe that I am some kind of... vessel of the infinite?

Shar pauses, struggling to put his feelings into words...

SHAR

At first... I believed I could safely leave my world in your hands... allowing me to abandon it. Then I believed that you were

the traitor... for letting the
Typhon Pact use you like a fool.

zh'Thiin is heartbroken - she has feared the same herself.

SHAR

(continuing)

But now... I believe that nothing
will stop you and me from saving
this world together... whether it
wants us to save it or not.

Touched by his faith, zh'Thiin takes Shar's hands...

ZH'THIIN

Together, Thirishar. Together...
we may yet be Whole.

Off Shar's roiling emotions...

36 INT. ARGAYA BASE - LEGATE'S OFFICE

Legate Macet paces behind his chair, frustrated...

MACET

Cardassia just wants to be whole
again. To be able to feed its own
people without having to rely on
outside help. To no longer be seen
as a third-rate power, pitied by
the rest of the Alpha Quadrant.

Ro sits in another chair, listening sympathetically. Evik
stands by the window, their mediator...

EVIK

Is that how you think you're seen?

MACET

We all know it is. That is what's
behind this refusal to follow our
agreement. Envy at what others
have, but too much pride to accept
it from them. Cardassians would
rather take than be freely given.

RO

Wasn't that always your problem?
Any "whole-ness" Cardassia had in
the past was at the expense of
other people, not with their help.
That's what leads to wars.

MACET

Exactly why I have been trying to
lead them down a different path.
Cardassia cannot survive more war.

RO

Neither can the Federation - we
have that in common, Macet. Our
people are feeling the same as
yours - tired of being pitied.

EVIK

Then please, please, both of you.
Let that commonality be the bridge
that brings you together at last.

They sit and think it over...

37 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - INFIRMARY

Stannis, the Orion security guard, is first to open the
door of the Infirmary. He finds only the NURSE who healed
Shar in 13x19, so he nods to the others. Sisko and Bashir
carry-walk Thirin in, with Rogers covering their backs.

NURSE

What the hell is going on?

BASHIR

Nurse, I need your help - he's got
serious abdominal trauma, we need
to operate immediately.

With a patient to focus on, the Nurse helps Bashir to get
Thirin onto a bio-bed. They set to work immediately...

BASHIR

I think we got to him in time.

SISKO

I hope so. The last thing we need
is the Commodore of the Andorian
Guard dying under Starfleet care.

Stannis and Rogers, covering the door, REACT to the sound
of urgent footsteps approaching...

...but it is only Minister CH'LHREN, looking breathless and
panicked. Sisko nods to the security to let him in...

SISKO

Good to see you, Minister.

CH'LHREN

Seemed like a good place to hide.

Suddenly a voice bursts from all the Starfleet combadges in
the room, startling ch'Lhren...

RELKDAHZ (comm)

This is Commander Relkdahz to all
Starfleet personnel - system purge
and reboot is complete. Security
grid is reactivated, including all
weapons, forcefields and comms.

While Sisko receives this news with relief, ch'Lhren covers
a grimace of annoyance...

SISKO

(taps combadge)

Outstanding work, Commander. Have
you been able to get in contact
with the *Robinson*?

RELKDAHZ (comm)

Negative, Captain. The ship does
not appear to be in orbit anymore.

Sisko catches Bashir's worried eye...

SISKO

Acknowledged. Commander Uteln,
status of the delegates?

UTELN (comm)

All safe, Captain. I've heard from
the Presider's personal guard too
- she's in her office, secured.

SISKO

Alright, carry on. Sisko out.

The line drops. Sisko turns to the still-working Bashir...

BASHIR

Now what do we do?

SISKO

Uteln will get all the protesters
under control. He's got all of
Thirin's officers with him.

BASHIR

I wouldn't trust that, Captain.
It was an Andorian who did this -
(re Thirin)
- and we never did find out who
gave the *Treishya* access to our
systems. They could have any
number of sympathisers.

In a flash, ch'Lhren pulls another tranquilliser gun from
beneath his robes and SHOTS Stannis and Rogers with it. As
the only two armed people in the room collapse unconscious,
Sisko turns in rage to ch'Lhren...

CH' LHREN

He's right. They do.

Off ch'Lhren's nervous but determined face...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

38 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - INFIRMARY

Where we left it - a nervous but determined ch'Lhren holds a tranquilliser gun on a ragingly angry Sisko. Stannis and Rogers, the two security guards, are already unconscious.

SISKO

You... you're with the *Treishya*.

CH'LHREN

With those who actually care about our people remaining as Andorians, and not as some kind of twisted alien half-breeds? Yes, I am.

The nurse is scared, but Bashir grabs her attention...

BASHIR

Hey - forget about them. Eyes on your patient.

She does. Bashir turns his back on the confrontation and keeps working on Commodore Thirin...

...but with his back turned, Bashir PRESSES firmly on his combadge, creating an ongoing open channel. Meanwhile...

SISKO

You're the one who infiltrated our computer network...

39 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - ATRIUM

...where the combadge of every Starfleet officer, including UTELN and RELKDAHZ, comes to life with Sisko's voice...

SISKO (comm)

(continuing)

...the one who caused this chaos.

CH'LHREN (comm)

I did more than that, Captain.

Around the Starfleeters, their Andorian Guard colleagues recognise the voice of their Security Minister...

CH' LHREN (comm)
(continuing)
...I took control of your entire ship, and sent it far, far away.

40 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - PRESIDER'S OFFICE

...where Presider sh'Thalis stands listening to the voices coming from the combadge of two Starfleet security present, along with her ceremonially armoured personal guards...

CH' LHREN (comm)
(continuing)
...and because I was a Starfleet officer myself before I saw the light, I know everything they'll try to do before they do it.

sh'Thalis stews furiously...

41 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - INFIRMARY

Sisko and ch'Lhren...

SISKO
(quietly furious)
You've betrayed the Federation.

CH' LHREN
(agitated)
No! The Federation betrayed us!
You had the knowledge all along,
a hundred years you've known how
to save us, and you refused!

SISKO
I'm not going to debate galactic policy with you. You endangered the people I care about, the people I am responsible for. And no-one... gets away with that.

CH'LHREN

You're in no position to threaten,
Captain. You're on my world now -

Suddenly, a voice from outside in the corridor...

UTELN (o.s.)

Quick, they're in here!

In the split-second as ch'Lhren is distracted, Sisko moves - he PUNCHES ch'Lhren hard, catches the tranquilliser gun before it can drop, and aims it back at ch'Lhren instead.

Then the door opens and UTELN appears, phaser out, a posse of Starfleet and Andorian security behind him.

CH'LHREN

Guards! Arrest this human! He just assaulted me!

UTELN

I'm sorry, Minister, but everyone heard your conversation with the Captain. We know you're *Treishya*.

The Andorian Guard officers move to arrest ch'Lhren, while the Starfleet officers check on their fallen comrades. Then a new voice from Sisko's combadge...

ROGEIRO (comm)

Rogeiroy to Sisko - please respond!

SISKO

Commander, are you in orbit?

ROGEIRO (comm)

Yes, sir. The *Treishya* tried to get rid of us. They failed.

SISKO

Beam Doctor Bashir and his patient straight to sickbay, immediately.

ROGEIRO (comm)

Stand by...

Bashir nods his thanks, then he and Thirin DEMATERIALISE.

SISKO
(re ch'Lhren)
And get him out of here.

The guards drag a cuffed ch'Lhren away. Sisko hands the tranquilliser gun to Utehn...

UTELN
Are you alright, Captain?

SISKO
I'm fine. Help the nurse...

Utehn helps the Nurse pick up Stannis and Rogers. But Sisko is still furious...

42 INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

KIRA runs down the corridor in her night clothes. On her way she intercepts Ranjen RANSEL, who is likewise. They keep running, towards some YELLS of pain, and a voice...

OPAKA (o.s.)
Nurse! We need help! Nurse!

Kira and Ransel reach a certain room, push the door open...

43 INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - RAIQ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

...and enter to see RAIQ screaming in labour, OPAKA doing her best to help from under the sheet-covered business end.

OPAKA
Nerys - take her hand, help her.
Ransel - more towels and water.

Ransel runs to the bathroom off-screen, past VEXH, the male Ascendant, who stands back, observing dispassionately.

Kira runs to Raiq's side and takes her hand, the terrified Ascendant woman pleading silently with her...

...until another contraction hits and she SCREAMS.

KIRA
I guess Ascendants don't have nice
quiet births like Bajorans do...

OPAKA
It would appear not.

A horrible wet WRENCHING sound as something breaks...

KIRA
What in fire was that?

As Ransel arrives with the towels and a bowl of water...

RANSEL
Probably her bio-armour breaking.
It's been stretched more and more
as the pregnancy progressed - I'd
guess it reached its limit.

RAIQ
(gritted teeth)
Oh let the True take me!

KIRA
Don't worry, Raiq. We're all here
with you. Me, Sulan... even Vexh.

From across the room, Vexh continues to watch as if events
are of only the vaguest scientific interest to him...

OPAKA
Nearly there, Raiq. Keep pushing,
you're nearly there...

Raiq ROARS with one last push... and the CRIES of a newborn
baby come from beneath the sheet.

Kira grins, elated... Raiq slumps, exhausted...

Opaka and Ransel work together to clamp the cord, clean the
baby up with the towels and water, until at last...

...Opaka brings the new Ascendant baby out into full view,
swaddled in a towel.

The tiny creature is mostly humanoid - its newborn skin greyish-pink rather than the metallic silver of an adult Ascendant's bio-armour, but with the same golden compound eyes that seem to shine with an inner light.

KIRA

Oh, congratulations, Raiq. Well done. Well done.

OPAKA

Here she is. Welcome to the world, little girl. Raiq... would you like to meet your daughter?

Raiq looks to Kira, scared and unsure. She has no idea what to do with a baby. Kira is disappointed but comforting...

KIRA

That's okay, you don't have to.

VEXH

May I?

Vexh has stepped forward, suddenly unable to take his eyes off the tiny baby. He looks to Raiq for permission...

Raiq looks to Kira, giving up jurisdiction in her fear...

Kira is pleasantly surprised and nods permission to Vexh...

...and Vexh gently takes the baby from Opaka, cradling her perfectly, gazing at her like an utterly smitten father...

VEXH

Welcome, young one. I am Vexh.

As Kira watches in amazement...

44 EXT. SPACE - ARGAYA ORBIT

The colonist convoy, the *Defiant*, the Cardassian ships...

45 INT. ARGAYA BASE - LEGATE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Evik stands by the window, while Ro and Macet sit...

EVIK

So... at the root of it, everyone wants the same thing. That's good - it's wonderful, in fact. The problem is that they all think the only way they can have it, is at the expense of someone else.

RO

Cardassia has the territory the Federation needs, but Cardassia is unwilling to give that territory up without something in return.

EVIK

Then what does Cardassia need that the Federation has, and that they would accept instead?

MACET

And that won't leave us feeling patronised and condescended to?

They sit and think...

...until eventually a grin slowly grows upon Ro's face. She gets up, paces around, her mind working a mile a minute.

EVIK

Commander? You have an idea?

RO

Oh, I have an idea alright. And it's a big one. Admiral Akaar's gonna hate it...

(grin)

...I can't wait to tell him.

As Evik and Macet wonder what's going on...

46 EXT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA BUILDING - DAY

Outside the Parliament, the chaos has burned itself out. Andorian civilians sit on the grass with wrists tied behind them, while Guards keep watch...

Presider sh'Thalis stands behind her crescent-shaped desk, with members of her personal armoured guard holding the cuffed Minister ch'Lhren before her. Sisko, Uteln, Shar and Professor zh'Thiin are also present, but not the focus.

SH'THALIS

I don't understand this, Threlas.
I thought we were friends.

CH'LHREN

(small smile)

Friends? With the *shen* who allows outsiders to pollute our world, subvert our sovereignty, enslave our people for their own ends?

SHAR

(can't stop himself)

Enslave our people? Andor is a founding member of the Federation, an ally for over two centuries, joining of our own free will.

CH'LHREN

What you mean is that our leaders were manoeuvred into an alliance, after the humans begged us to help them against the Romulans in a war of their own making. And now that war with the Romulans is again on the horizon, they work to ensure we are still under their control.

SISKO

Under our control? That's insane.
Andor is an equal partner.

CH'LHREN

What's insane is that you place the protection of your precious secrets over helping a supposed ally. Either you offer us sub-standard treatment with only a

slim chance of success and a very real chance of actually worsening our problem, or you stand by and watch us die out as a race, all in order to keep buried whatever wondrous mystery you unearthed and chose not to share. Are those the actions of an ally, Captain?

SH'THALIS

(shakes head)

Clearly you have been brainwashed by the *Treishya's* propaganda. Even the Tholians' interference is now twisted to fit your agenda.

(to the guards)

Take him to the stockade, let the Elders deal with him. At least his nonsense is exposed and over with.

But as the guards lead ch'Lhren away, he is infuriatingly smug. He smiles back at sh'Thalis...

CH'LHREN

You think it's over, Presider? I am but a humble servant of the *Treishya*, one of many. And as I said earlier, we are capable of planning for all eventualities...

ch'Lhren is led away by the guards, leaving Sisko, Uteln, zh'Thiin, sh'Thalis and one Lieutenant Thirishar ch'Thane very worried for what may come next...

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW